

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

AID-05 /069 W

-----068395 280438Z /14

R 271025Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7066

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 6550

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KE

SUBJ: VICE PRESIDENT MOI AND ATTORNEY GENERAL NJONJO

EXCHANGE WORDS IN PARLIAMENT

1. SECOND DAY OF NEW PARLIAMENTARY SESSION APRIL 26 WAS MARKED BY HIGHLY UNUSUAL SHARP EXCHANGE BETWEEN VICE PRESIDENT MOI AND ATTORNEY GENERAL NJONJO, WHO FOR YEARS HAVE BEEN CLOSE POLITICAL ALLIES.

2. ISSUE AROSE WHEN MOI, AS LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, INTRODUCED MOTION TO REVIVE SELECT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE, FIRST ESTABLISHED THREE YEARS AGO TO LOOK INTO ISSUE OF LAND OWNERSHIP IN COASTAL STRIP. COMMITTEE'S REPORT IS VIRTUALLY COMPLETE NOW, BUT UNDER PARLIAMENTARY RULES COMMITTEE MUST BE FORMALLY REVIVED IN THIS SESSION SO THAT REPORT CAN BE PRESENTED. TO SURPRISE OF MOST MP'S AND OTHER OBSERVERS NJONJO STOOD AND OPPOSED MOI'S MOTION. MOI THEREUPON REMINDED NJONJO THAT THERE COULD BE ONLY ONE GOVERNMENT POSITION, AND THAT HE, MOI, HAD SPOKEN FOR THE GOVERNMENT. NJONJO RETORTED THAT HE WOULD CONTINUE TO OPPOSE MOTION, AND THAT IF HE DID NOT PREVAIL IN PARLIAMENT, HE WOULD FIGHT IT ELSEWHERE. NJONJO'S POSITION WAS SUPPORTED IN DEBATE BY G.G. KARIUKI, ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR LANDS AND SETTLEMENT, BUT ALL OTHER SPEAKERS BACKED MOI.
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3. PRESS ACCOUNTS APRIL 27 MADE NO MENTION OF THIS EXCHANGE. HOWEVER, IT WAS NOTED THAT MOI'S MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY. ASSUME THAT VOTE TOOK PLACE LATE IN AFTERNOON AFTER BOTH NJONJO AND KARIUKI HAD LEFT CHAMBER.

4. COMMENT: CONVERSATIONS WITH MP'S CLOSE TO MOI AND NJONJO

LEAVE DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT ALL IS NOT WELL BETWEEN THEM.
ASSISTANT FOREIGN MINISTER MWANZANDI TOLD EMBOFF THAT
"LITTLE EXPLOSION HAD BEEN BREWING FOR SEVERAL WEEKS"
BETWEEN THESE TWO. APPARENTLY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEM ARE NOT
RELATED TO SUCCESSION STRATEGY BUT ARE RATHER OF PERSONAL
NATURE. WE KNOW THAT BOTH NJONJO AND G.G. KARIUKI HAVE LAND
HOLDINGS ON COAST WHICH MIGHT BE ADVERSELY EFFECTED BY
REPORTED. AS IS SO OFTEN THE CASE HERE, PERSONAL FINANCIAL
INTERESTS AND POLITICS BECOME INTERTWINDED. HOWEVER,
LOGIC AND REASON SUGGEST THAT MOI AND NJONJO WILL FIND A WAY
TO RESOLVE WHATEVER PROBLEMS THEY HAVE BEFORE POLITICAL
OPPONENTS EXPLOIT THEM.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, PARTY DISSENSION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NAIROB06550
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780181-0657
Format: TEL
From: NAIROBI
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780410/aaaaahti.tel
Line Count: 75
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 6240b2a5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2814704
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VICE PRESIDENT MOI AND ATTORNEY GENERAL NJONJO EXCHANGE WORDS IN PARLIAMENT
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, KE, (MOI, DANIEL T ARAP), (NJONJO, CHARLES)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/6240b2a5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014